



DISASTER & SOCIAL CRISIS RESEARCH NETWORK *ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER*

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the European Sociological Association
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This is the quarterly electronic newsletter of the Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network. The purpose of the D&SCRN is to promote the study, research and analysis of "natural", "technological" and "social" disasters with a view to contributing to the development of disaster resilient European communities, and preventing or mitigating the human, economic, social, cultural and psychological effects of crises and disasters.

The D&SCRN Electronic Newsletter is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). The previously published newsletters are downloadable at the network's new webpage www.erc.gr/english/d&scrn.

Announcements of conferences, book, film, and CD-ROM reviews, reportage on conferences, disaster diaries, brief articles on best or worst practices in disaster prevention and recovery, commentaries on disasters and crises, human interest stories relevant to disasters, etc. should be sent electronically to the editor, Susann Ullberg (susann.ullberg@fhs.se) no later than the first of the month of publication. Contributions to the newsletter should preferably be written in a concise format (½-1 page long maximum) in order to make reading comprehensive albeit focused.

Relevant contributions from the field of disaster and crisis research, as well as from applied disaster and crisis management practice, are most welcome!

Philip Buckle,
D&SCRN Coordinator
Susann Ullberg,
E-Newsletter Editor



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Editor's Note: All "signed" texts express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the editor, the D&SCRN or those of CRISMART/Swedish National Defence College.

1) Note from the D&SCRN Coordinator

Collaboration

The following is an extract of an email from the President of the ESA asking for people's views on the issues. I invite you to let me know what you think and I'll collate and pass our comments on.

This matter parallels my own interest in fostering closer links between research groups and to date I have reached nominal agreement to explore closer collaboration with some groups in the Antipodes. Engaging in collaborative activity is a slow process but I remain hopeful. More news to follow soon.

"Dear Research Networks Coordinators,

...I am convinced that ESA might play an important role into European strategies of science policy, a role which could represent also a specific service from ESA towards its members. To this purpose, I have tried to strengthen so far connections with the network of Associations gathered under the Initiative for science in Europe (ISE), where ESA is the only Association of Social Sciences together with ECPR. As I told you, ISE has been at the origins of the European Research Council (ERC), which is by now operating although its legal constitution is not yet accomplished, and has a role to play within the Framework Program 7. The social sciences and humanities have got a significant score of representatives in the ERC (5 out of 22 scientists, for Sociology Manuel Castells and Helga Nowotny). It seems to me extremely important that we work in close connection with them, engaging ESA in promoting a debate among European sociologists about Sociology's priorities, needs and development perspectives, all actions within the scope of the ERC.

...On a more general line of thoughts, I think our RNs could help in organizing the debate I was referring to. To this purpose, I think we could organize a general meeting at the Glasgow Conference where National Associations and RNs coordinators could discuss about these topics related to European strategies, with other people from the ISE and hopefully with our ERC representatives. This could be prepared through a previous meeting in Paris in the late Fall 2006 (first half of Dec.).

I would like to know your views on this. Would you be interested in actively participating to such a debate? Do you think this could be done together with National Associations, or would you prefer a separate moment of consultation? Although our proposal to create a sort of RNs Council, where their coordinators could meet together and with the executive committee in a special session during the Conference, has not generated many reactions, contrary to our expectations, I hope this does not mean that RNs are not interested into this kind of proposals and commitments. So please, as soon as you will resume your activity after the summer holidays, think about writing us your views over the all matter and your reactions to our proposals...."

ESA 2007 - Glasgow

Planning for this is about to begin with myself and Graham Marsh open to ideas and suggestions. Andrew Coghlan a Vice President Executive Board of the Research Committee on Disasters (RC 39) International Sociological Association will be working with us and this will be a step towards greater joint activity in the future. Nicholas Petropoulos mentions this issue in his report on ISA, Durban.

Standards in Disaster Management

As a practitioner in the field of disaster management it troubled me that there were no agreed standards by which the performance of governments, NGOs and private companies could be judged. Nor are there any standards by which people and communities who are at risk or who have been affected can evaluate their needs and the type and quantity of support they receive.

The British Overseas Non-Government Organisations for Development (BOND) group in the UK have begun a project to investigate and if possible develop standards for disaster recovery. This initiative flows from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami but has applicability across a range of different events.

A first meeting has been held and a small working group set up. We agreed that numerous standards, principles and criteria exist already. These include

- Standards for Civil Protection in England and Wales HOME OFFICE October 1999
- Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Geneva: Sphere Project
- DfID A common approach to Child Protection for international NGOs
- The Code of Conduct Principles of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes
- Humanitarian Accountability Partnership - International (May 2005)
- Handbook for Emergencies, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, 2000

There is no shortage of evaluation frameworks, though some are of greater utility than others. This of course raises the problem of whether we need another set and, whether or not we do how we integrate and rationalise the sets we have.

I would be grateful for your ideas on this. How can we judge success and failure in the provision of services to people and communities at risk?

A tentative conclusion of the working party is that arbitrary, 'objective' and numerate 'criteria may be of little value given the need for standards to be applicable to a wide range of events and cultures. The feeling of the group was that general statements of principle might be more relevant, although less prescriptive in terms of defined outcomes.

Any thoughts?

Newsletter Editor

Susann has done a wonderful job for the past few years. I have no doubt that I speak for every one of us in saying that she has been central to our continuing viability as a group. She has raised the value of introducing 'new blood' to the Newsletter editorship. To this end I ask for a volunteer to step into Susann's shoes.

A role that requires commitment, hard work, little public recognition but of great value in exchanging information between network members and advancing the cause of research, policy and practice in disaster risk management.

By any account an enticing job offer. Volunteer by writing to me at philip.buckle@gmail.com

Philip Buckle,
D&SCRN Coordinator

2) D&SCRN web manager reports

🌟 World Congress of Sociology 2006

The 16th World Congress of Sociology (WCS) was held in Durban, South Africa, during the period 23-29 July 2006. The Congress was attended by about 3,000 sociologists, social scientists and other scientists. It was the first time that the International Sociological Association (ISA) organized a Congress in an African Country, especially in a country that had only recently overthrown the yoke of colonialism and apartheid. The general theme of the Congress was "The Quality of Social Existence in a Globalizing World". During the 6 days of the WCS, the Research Committee 39 (Sociology of Disasters), under the general coordination of Prof. Joseph Scanlon of Carleton University, Canada (also a member of D&SCRN Coordinating Committee) had organized ten sessions: specifically, six "topical sessions" (disaster research, epidemics as disasters, the impact of culture on emergency planning and response, handling the tsunami dead, race/social justice and disaster, focus on Africa), three "open paper" sessions which negotiated various aspects of disasters and social crises (e.g. terrorism, vulnerability of children, housing reconstruction in India after the tsunami, state response to the Indonesia tsunami, tornado and hurricane radio warnings, etc.), and a "joint session" on environment and disasters" organized by the respective two research committees (RC24 and RC39).

Although there was little correlation between the planned and the actual composition of the RC39 sessions—due to non-shows and on-the-spot replacements, almost all of the originally planned sessions materialized, thanks to the effective crisis-management capacities of the general coordinator. Most of the presentations were of excellent professional quality, both theoretically and methodologically, and deserve consideration for publication. They included both "qualitative" and "quantitative" approaches and they covered the whole range of "natural", "technological" and "social" disasters, as well as both the "sudden" and "slow" onset disasters. However, few of the papers were available for distribution and about half of the presentations had been incorporated in the Congress book of abstracts, so it is impossible to risk an overview of the crucial points of the presentations.

The RC39 sessions were attended by a steady group of about 15 to 30 participants, of various disciplines and levels of disaster expertise—a fact which made for high quality discussions and also provided an opportunity for a good introduction of the newcomers to the sociology of disasters. The interventions of the discussants (many of whom were recruited at the conference) contributed further to the high quality of the discussions. The papers prompted lively discussions on the concepts of disasters, crises, vulnerability and resilience, the role of corruption in accidents, government accountability, the complexities of body identification in mass-death emergencies, the phenomenon of convergence and the dilemma of public safety and privacy.

The S. Africa venue and the special RC39 session on Africa ("Focus on Africa") gave the opportunity to non-African sociologists to become more acquainted with the work of African sociologists; while at the same time it exposed western biases for "fast-onset" (e.g. earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, terrorist attacks) and the principal concerns of African social scientists for "slow-onset" disasters (e.g. famines, epidemics, conflicts etc.). Also, it underlined the importance of sustainable development in the prevention and mitigation of disaster impacts, though development is not always a guarantee for the development of resilience (See D. Markel and Chris Stoney's presentation on the management of the SAR epidemic in the Greater Toronto Area).

The ISA practice of scheduling the RC sessions in the afternoon and the non-scheduling of RC39 sessions in the evening gave the opportunity to the RC39 members to attend plenary and integrative sessions involving more than two Research Committees or National Associations in the morning and the sessions of other Research Committees in the evenings. This is a good scheduling practice, it should be continued by ISA and perhaps adopted by regional associations such as ESA in view of the fact that most congress participants have multiple professional and social interests. The writer was able to attend sessions on social movements, on the third world and on world conflicts—which pertain to the so-called "complex" disasters

that are often more catastrophic than the so-called "natural" disasters. The ongoing bombardment of Lebanon, the "civil" war in Iraq and the mass killings of innocent citizens on all sides, weighed heavily on the minds of the sociologists attending the world -conflict sessions. At one of these sessions, the writer proposed that oppressed groups give serious consideration to adopting non-violence approaches; after all Ghandi started his "passive" resistance in S. Africa, which culminated in the overthrow of British imperialism.. He made several interventions on the need of the ISA to take a more active role as a global organization in the solution of long-standing social problems--especially in the prevention of conflict and violence among nations and in the context of an emergent global civil society. Action sociologists might also want to get involved in the World Social Forum (that meets next year in Nairobi) and represents a grass-roots movement that could eventually restructure an incapacitated and ineffectual UN.

Even though there was no formal business meeting due to the non-show of Executive Committee Members, Joe Scanlon, briefed the session participants on the economic and membership status of RC39 and announced the election results of the new Executive Committee. Ron Perry of Arizona State University is the new President of the RC39. The outgoing President's (Robert Stalling's) report, which stressed the need for disaster sociologists to use their knowledge to test general sociology theory was presented by Avi Kirschenbaum (Barton's collective stress model was cited among others). I might add that Barton's model may indeed be a good theoretical approach to integrate the "disaster" and "crisis" literature.

The RC39 Committee also took part in the ISA executive Committee elections held during the Congress. The writer represented and voted on behalf of RC39 in the Research Council meetings, following an authorization by Joe Scanlon—the legitimate representative to the WCS. The new President of ISA is Michel Wieviorka, Directeur d'Etudes, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Science Sociales, and Director of the Centre for Sociological Analysis and Intervention. Professor Wieviorka has done research on social movements, terrorism, racism, post-communist societies, multiculturalism and violence. Some of his interests coincide with the interests of RC39 and the D&SCRN. This should be taken into account in suggesting plenary and semiplenary speakers for the 2010 WCS.

Aside from the problem of speaker dropouts and improvised replacements that characterized most of the WCS Sessions, the 16th World Congress of Sociology was generally well organized: professionally, culturally and practically (hotel accommodations, provision of food, service, shops with local products, field trips to gamelands and the urban areas). Nonetheless, some of us thought that the urban tours could have been better organized with a view to greater social relevance for sociologists.

A serious problem for the delegates attending the WCS was street safety. The local organizing committee and the local police had warned the delegates not to walk alone, especially at night, due to the possibility of street muggings and robberies. Such incidents were reported in the local press just before the conference. There were also such reports by colleagues who had become victimized themselves during the conference. Finally, during a meeting of the Greek sociologists with the local Greek community in Durban, the officials reported two theft-related killings of Greek-African citizens during the preceding week. The actual episodes added credence to the local organizing committee's warnings and had their impact in restricting the free movement of the delegates within the city. This discouraged outings and walks on the beautiful Indian Ocean beach front, favored mobility in groups, organized transport and transport by taxi. In one case, where our group was stranded at night, local S. Africa police volunteered to transport us to our hotels. Nonetheless, a discussion with a federal S. African official (European background) on the return flight from Durban to Johannesburg revealed that the street warning may have been an exaggeration and that the high-risk areas in Durban are restricted in number. Perhaps the local organizers should have constructed risk-level maps to expedite the mobility of the delegates, without stigmatizing local businesses.

As sociologists we can understand the dynamics of a S. African society undergoing a painful social transition from a colonial/apartheid status to an independent modern democracy. Indeed, S. Africa under the new black leadership is making tremendous social and economic strides; however, there are still social and class contradictions, extensive poverty and high anomie levels following development, urbanization and globalization that may be conducive to crime in the absence of appropriate social infrastructures.

There is also no doubt that sociologists, both African and non-African, should contribute to the reduction of these contradictions and the development of the vital social infrastructures to contain and prevent crime on the streets. And the WCS gave us an opportunity to become aware of the challenges and to suggest solutions.

The next World Congress of Sociology - four years from now- will be held in Gothenburg, Sweden, 11-17 July 2010. During the closing session of the WCS in Durban, we saw a beautiful documentary of Gothenburg, and wondered why we have to wait four years for the next WCS. The new President of RC39, Ron Perry, has delegated to Joseph Scanlon, the general coordinator of the Durban sessions, the challenging task of organizing the RC sessions for the 17th WCS. Lori Peek from Colorado State University will assist Joe in the organization of the sessions. Joe has already some ideas for sessions on theory and methodology of disasters, pandemics, and for joint sessions with the Sociology of the Environment (disasters and the environment) and Sociolinguistics (emergency communications) Research Committees. There are also discussions with Swedish scholars for the organization in Stockholm of a pre-congress session similar to the one held in Macedon, Australia during the 15th WCS. No doubt, Prof. Scanlon will be open to the organization of joint sessions with D&SCRN of the European Sociological Association. In fact, the organization of joint sessions with the D&SCRN could start from the next ESA conference, "Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society", 3-7 September 2007 in Glasgow, Scotland. The theme of the ESA conference will give an opportunity to the members to develop the "Crisis" dimension of the ESA "Disaster and Social Crisis Research Network".

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3) Conferences Coming Up

Society for Economic Anthropology

2007 SEA Annual Meeting

The Political Economy of Hazards and
Disasters

April 13-14, 2007
Greensboro, North Carolina

<http://sea.org.ohio-state.edu/2007meeting.htm>



15th World Congress on Disaster and Emergency Medicine

13th-16th May 2007

Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

<http://www.wcdem2007.org/>

4) Call For Papers



An upcoming special issue of the journal *Children, Youth and Environments* will advance scholarly and applied knowledge regarding the experiences of children in disasters. This special issue will help scholars and practitioners gain insight into the unique vulnerabilities and special capacities of children by exploring what disasters do to children and youth, what is done on their behalf, and what they do for themselves. Special issue authors will examine children's experiences in disasters, while elucidating linkages between disasters and the larger social, economic, political, and cultural contexts in which these events occur. Here disasters are broadly defined as extreme natural, technological, or intentional human-caused events. Manuscripts that are international in scope and address the consequences of disasters for children in the developed as well as the developing world are encouraged. Innovative theoretical, empirical, or methodological manuscripts from various disciplinary perspectives will be considered for inclusion in the special issue. Potential contributors should submit a one-page abstract to the special issue editor, Dr. Lori Peek (lori.peek@colostate.edu), by **September 15, 2006**. After evaluation of the relevance of the abstracts to the special issue, a number of authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts to the journal for peer review.

Children, Youth and Environments is a peer-reviewed journal with a multidisciplinary audience of researchers, policy makers, and professionals in 143 countries (<http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/index.htm>). For further information please check www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/future_issues.htm



The *Natural Hazards Review* stands on the realization that natural disaster losses result from interactions between the physical world, the constructed environment, and the character of the societies and people who occupy them. The journal is dedicated to bringing together the physical, social, and behavioral sciences; engineering; and the regulatory and policy environments to provide a forum for cutting edge, holistic, and cross-disciplinary approaches to natural hazards loss and cost reduction. The journal offers a means for researchers and practitioners working together to publish the results of truly interdisciplinary and partnered approaches to loss reduction and long-term disaster resiliency. Engineering topics covered include the characterization of hazard forces and the planning, design, construction, maintenance, performance and use of structures in the physical environment. Social and behavioral sciences topics addressed include a range of issues related to hazard mitigation and human response as well as significant issues related to the built environment such as land use, building standards, and the role of financial markets and insurance. The specific physical science topics covered include those pertinent to understanding the hazardous character of the world and the performance of the structures that we build to accommodate our way of life. More importantly, the journal features papers co-authored by people from a variety of specializations who bring a cross-disciplinary perspective to the complex factors that contribute to disasters in today's-and especially tomorrow's-world.

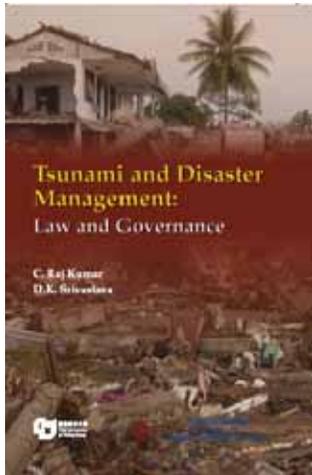
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5) Recent Publications



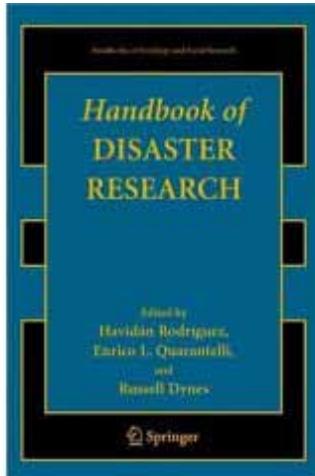
JORNADAS SOBRE GESTION DE CRISIS: MAS ALLÁ DE LA SOCIEDAD DE RIESGO. By Ruano Gómez, Juan de Dios (Ed.) (2006) Universidade Da Coruña

This publication gathers the papers presented made at the 1st Crisis Management Conference at the Sociology Department of the A Coruña University (Spain) in November 2005. The papers published are concerned with theoretical, empirical and methodological issues in relation to crises and disasters, from the perspectives of sociology, political science, public administration and communication. Among the empirical cases analysed are the terrorist actions of 9/11 in New York (2001) and that of 11/M in Madrid (2004); the environmental disaster of the Prestige oil tank in Galicia (Spain, 2002), and the historical Lisbon earthquake (1755, Portugal). Among the theoretical discussions are that of social change in relation to disaster and risk, and that of disaster mythology. For further information and how to acquire this publication, please contact Prof. Juan de Dios Ruano Gómez: juande@udc.es



TSUNAMI AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT: LAW AND GOVERNANCE. By Kumar, C.R. & Srivastava, D.K. (2006)
Sweet & Maxwell Asia

The International Conference on Issues Relating to Disaster Management: Challenges for Governance Reform in Asia was held at the School of Law, City University of Hong Kong in March 2005. The success of this conference eventually led to this work *Tsunami and Disaster Management: Law and Governance* and is a collaborative effort by fifteen internationally renowned academics, practitioners and disaster management experts who also presented at this conference. This work highlights thematic issues relating to disaster management and their implications for governance reform in Asia and beyond. Critical examination of the legal and governance issues, assessment of the level of preparedness in the countries that have been affected by the South-east Asia earthquake and its impact on the workings of public and private institutions on ways to improve responsiveness, availability of aid and relief and working with victims are just some of the many issues covered.



HANDBOOK OF DISASTER RESEARCH. By Rodriguez, H., Quarantelli, E. & R. Dynes (2006) Springer

Recent disasters, such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, bomb explosions in London, Hurricane Katrina, the Pakistan Earthquake, floods in Central America, and landslides in Indonesia, among many others, have resulted in an extensive loss of life, social disruption, and significant economic impacts to local and national economies, and have made headline news in countries throughout the world. Thus the *Handbook of Disaster Research* is a timely and much needed contribution to the field of disasters. The editors of this *Handbook* have brought together a comprehensive and interdisciplinary volume with a diverse and international group of contributors. The *Handbook* is based on the principle that disasters are social constructions and focuses on social science disaster research. Attention is given to conceptual issues dealing with the concept "disaster" and to methodological issues relating to research on disasters, including Geographic Information Systems as a useful research tool and its implications for future research; how disaster research is increasingly being used in the emergency management curriculum; and how research is useful in dealing with emergency operations. The *Handbook*

also includes a number of essays focusing on various types of vulnerabilities. In addition, there are discussions on community processes that are evoked by disasters, including warnings, search and rescue, coordination, and organizational adaptation, as well as, dealing with death and injury, and recovery, and the role of the media in disasters; special attention is given to emergency systems in several nation states. The *Handbook* also includes contributions focusing on the relationship between disaster and development, the popular culture of disasters, new dimensions of disaster research, as well as projections of disasters into the future. Disasters allow the opportunity for social scientists to study human behavior in which adaptation, resilience and innovation are often more clearly revealed than in "normal" and stable times. The *Handbook of Disaster Research* provides an interdisciplinary and international approach to disasters with theoretical, methodological, and practical applications.

6) Writers' Corner

Impressions on the Sociology of Disasters at ISA Durban 2006

Andrew Collins, Northumbria University (UK)

The RC39 sessions for the Sociology of Disasters at Durban were a reflection of the wealth of good quality scholarly activity going on in this field. They were in many instances highly interdisciplinary, combining social, economic and environmental aspects of disasters. This included participation of people or personal accounts of experiences from beyond the academy. The range of approaches used to convey core ideas included examination of case studies, development of theoretical models, and personal eyewitness accounts of practice and policy in the disasters field. Perhaps one of the key issues that came out of the sessions remained how we understand and chose to represent disaster from different cultural perspectives. It seems that not only do we continue to be confronted by questions about what constitutes 'disaster' (a question now raised for many a year), but also how we now respond to differently constructed interpretations of disaster. This has become particularly clear with the recent international surge of interest in notions of disaster risk reduction, which in the first eighteen months since Kobe has yet to come to grips with disaster as a state beyond natural hazard risks, let alone sound funding mechanisms. For the continent in which ISA 2006 took place, disaster is synonymous with underdevelopment. The Africa session of the disasters stream heard how the number of dead and affected by 'disaster' in the continent, as defined by the International Committee of the Red Cross, pales in comparison to everyday morbidity and mortality from infectious disease. This disaster is in danger of being increasingly considered the norm. It is a function of governance, social, economic and environmental change with a consistent and slow onset outcome. Making this point is not to reduce the importance of disaster management or risk reduction, rather to indicate how its terrain has fallen short of hoped for targets to date. In terms of responding to the crisis in Africa, we have been left with little more than the rhetoric of sustainable development, handed down from the global arena to localised 'other worlds'. The clues to witnessing a real difference in the continent over the coming years will be in recognising the resilience and capacity of local people to defend physical and mental wellbeing in a globalising and largely uncaring world. Work being done by the Sociology of Disasters group has a crucial role to play in better understanding how that agenda can be empathised and realised.

